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## **The Construction of Media in the Political Identity of Wearing *Jilbab* by Policewomen**

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### **Abstract**

Veil is not only accepted as a religious obligation but also a medium of modernization and lifestyle transformation. In certain cases, it will be imposed toward becoming 'ideology' through various regulatory and governmental institutions. Therefore, veil is perceived as goodness and person's identity. Social conditions have changed about the veil in Indonesia. It causes a natural understanding for policewomen to also wear *jilbab* as well as other Muslim women, without having to be restricted by certain state regulations, including police regulations. Unfortunately, the recognition process becomes increasingly complex discourse. This paper examines three online media: [kompas.com](http://kompas.com), [tempo.co](http://tempo.co), and [republika.co.id](http://republika.co.id) in the issue of the political identity of wearing *jilbab* by a policewoman. Using critical discourse analysis, the article shows that each of the three media has character to present the information in the certain objectification theme, in which they have an important role in influencing the policy by constructing public awareness of identity for certain goals.

### **Keywords:**

Media, Political Identity, and Public Awareness

### **Introduction**

*Jilbab* for Javanese women has a broad range of interpretations following modernity and social transformation as the historical consciousness of collective action of the member of Islamic community (Suzanne 1996, 673-780). Moreover, *jilbab* also becomes the symbol of government's opponent when it has power to be demanding of democratic

reform in college Muslim student transformation (Hefner 2011, 159). Even though some of the feminist activists believe that *jilbab* is imposed to Indonesian woman as a symbol of 'pious' by the particular government,<sup>1</sup> the policy of decentralization also supported it as regional autonomy. It is not only creating new spaces of democratization but also giving rise to discriminatory local policies, especially for women.

As one of Islamic identities, *jilbab* cannot be directly interpreted as a product of culture, but also the process of becoming an ideology, although Muslim religious elites and Islamic feminist debate about the meaning of *jilbab* on how a woman should prefer using *jilbab* or not (Killian 2003; Bartkowski 2000, 411). In a religious country, the use of *jilbab* is still contested in the context of being Muslim which is an essential component of national identity (Zahedi 2007; Nagata 2007; Berger 1998). Nowadays, *jilbab* has multiple identities for a woman (Budiastuti 2012; Pawito 2012), not only refer to religious obligation, but also, social status, societal esteem (Barthel 1992), and the style demands that to be more internationally accepted (Saluz 2007; Nancy 2011).

In regard to the discourse of wearing *jilbab* by police women, most of people commented that it is part of religious right for every Muslim woman. It is an act in the discharge of their duty to follow Islamic teachings. However, some of those people argued that the police is a stated apparatus; therefore, they should be free from affiliation identity that is

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1 The Report of Fulfillment of Condition Monitoring of Constitutional Rights of Women in 16 cities in 7 provinces that there are 21 regional policy of the dress code has been issued in the range of 2000 to 2006. Two of them became the focus of monitoring of *Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan/Komnas Perempuan*, they are (a) the Banjar decree No. 19 of 2008 on the Clothing Office of Civil Servant in Banjar Government and (b) Regulation No. 05 Year 2003 on Muslims and Muslim Dress in Bulukumba. According to the report there are many cases of discriminatory violence against women such as the criminalization of women, control women's bodies, migrant workers, restrictions against Ahmadiyah community and others. Read more, *Atas Nama Otonomi Daerah: Pelembagaan Diskriminasi dalam Tatanan Negara-Bangsa Indonesia* (In the Name of Regional Autonomy: Institutionalizing Discrimination in the Indonesian Nation-State Order), Komnas Perempuan, 2010.

inherent in them, mainly political orientation. Therefore, the police has obligation related to the regulations of using the uniform as prescribed by the state.

In this case, the mass media has very important role in the management discourse (Spitulnik 1993). Until now, over the last six months, the discourse on the use of *jilbab* by policewoman still continues. Particularly in online media, after an answer from the chief of police was changed, it then caused the discussion to increasingly gain attention.

Media is also the most powerful tool in shaping identity. The more person obtained information through variety of media, the more one is questioning his position in response to the information (Rothman 1997). Online media is now moving very quickly to lead consumer opinion, especially the media that is affiliated with particular religion in order to uphold the goals of the establishment of community-based on religious doctrine.

Thus, if the readers pay attention to the discourse of the use of *jilbab*, they will find some facts and opinions that are overlapping in informing the process of fulfilling the rights of citizens and the state's demands. Unfortunately, this phase of the discourse to some extent would be politicized.

Based on the above explanations, there are some questions come up: How does the three online media online (Republika, Tempo, and Kompas) expose the case of using *jilbab* by policewomen in the constructing of the discourse of identity? How does the discourse raise dilemma of political recognition of human right by framing multiculturalism in Indonesia as the context? Hereby, the thesis statement coming up then is the media has certain interest for delivering the issues of wearing *jilbab* of policewomen, main 'religious' media that uses various religious statement for numbers of sources to 'enforce' the understanding of wearing *jilbab* as human right and the needs to support that right by providing the state budget. The

media constructs the awareness of public. One of the media shares the idea of the state obligation in accommodating religious need as the human right. In other media, they perform the state identity as an obligation; they more elaborate the vague of policy on fulfilling the human right. The frame of media triggers the increase of the popularization of the issues and then draws the gap between media representation of identity.

In this study, the online media selected were three online media namely, [republika.co.id/Republika Online \(ROL\)](http://republika.co.id), [kompas.com](http://kompas.com), and [tempo.co](http://tempo.co). There are hundred online media that is currently circulating in cyberspace, including [detik.com](http://detik.com) as the most popular media. However, I did not choose this site, since the characters of media has been fulfilled by all three sites mentioned; mainly the issue of wearing of *jilbab* is still debated within.

Compared to other online media, those three media has its excellence. In addition to the management of mass media that can be accounted for, they had an important qualified media writing by using 5W1H's information. The mass media did not use the sources based on published issued from other media, except for some international news. The most important thing in mass media is journalism activities. In online news, the most of the information is spreaded without the activity of responsible journalism. Therefore, the selection is not taken from news sites that defects the activity of journalism.

The range studied is the topic of veiling policewoman. For [tempo.co](http://tempo.co) and [kompas.com](http://kompas.com), I can search the news easily, because the reader can track the related news in the same issue in the one-page topic. It was different from ROL. It only provides much news related to news topic; approximately more than ten news every day in a recent report. However, ROL has the most number of news (67 news) than the others ([kompas.com](http://kompas.com): 19 news and [tempo.co](http://tempo.co) 43 news) in the case of veiling policewoman in the range from June until December 2013. That is because the ROL's

news are published briefly but many sources are over and over mentioned.

In the process of analysis, I use critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992, 73-78, 234-237) in connecting information by comparing the words and the method of delivering the news. Then, the technical approaches will be complemented by the theoretical discourse of multiculturalism in reading the issue of a veiling policewoman.

### **The Discourse of Identity**

Each person has identified himself continuously. In the same way, the identity also affects the way of thinking about something 'other' than them. Although it is not a single identity (moreover, identity is multiple, overlapping, and shifting), a person, consciously or not, specifies a particular identity as more important than the other identities. How people reflects the identity in a variety of forms ranging, from gender, race, nationality, social status, religion and others are bringing the process of negotiation.

Taylor (1989) calls identity as a source of selfhood, the fundamental orientation of human life. The Castells (2000) interpret identity as a source of meaning for someone, formed by their self through the process of individuation. However, the origin of identity formation cannot be separated from the 'identity construction' by groups, institutions, or agencies in identifying an identity. Maalouf called it as 'Allegiance' (2000) and 'construction' in Calhoun (1994). The relationship between the individual and the collectivity that affect each other identity, according to Maalouf, cause the biased and distorted of worldview. Although in some instances, identity has unique properties and inherent right to human dignity. Unfortunately, that biased in some cases lead to violence in the global tribes.

In the global context, people try to assimilate before going to 'global' world (Friedman 1995, 57). On the other side, global culture as the

new movement made the certain culture cannot be switched by, whether creating global citizen shares or weakens identity, even the power force them by the repressive way.

In the politic of multiculturalism, the group specifies the rights, such as self-government's right, poly-ethnic's rights, special representative of right, and how to identity recognition and cultural different accommodation, in the negotiation of bipolar of majority-minority. It is reflected in how religious and ethnic boundaries and identity makers influenced in economic and social interaction, how the history of past 'constructs' the interpretation of another identity, and the important thing is how the government is involved in the production of the image. In those questions, the right becomes in the two choices, amalgamation, and assimilation, mainly, in relative deprivation of the contestation of the resource. For Hefner (2001), the problem of pluralism and democracy brings multicultural citizenship with its consequence, moreover, Indonesia that has diverse cultural identities.

The difference of human being in their belief and behavior depends on how the production of the space (Henri 1991). On how people perceive their '*moral space*' as *locating source of good life* (Taylor 1988), they understand the difference between their belief and others by '*moral topography of the self*' to identify the standard of the good in the two level of *ordinary goods and constitutive good*. In the problem of human right, when the multicultural interest represents in the spatial space, it will be getting complicated by creating spaces for many interoperations. How the state recognizes the goods as a human right for its citizen without disturb the other citizen right means the state should do their function as the mediators for those multicultural identities. Those discourses of identity will be portrayed by the work of mass media online represent the information of the debated of a veiling policewoman. How the state accommodates the woman right of fulfilling their religious obligation as the state apparatus in the

framework of made media. Then, the contestation of identity, human right, the majority, and media construction will be mapped.

### **The Right of Wearing *Jilbab* for Policewoman**

In the Islamic teaching, Muslim believes that *Hijab* or *jilbab* is an Islamic obligation on Muslim women, which is well-established by means of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the agreement of reliable *Shari'ah* scholars in past and present. In the Qur'an, it is said **“O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (when they go abroad). That will be better, so that they may be recognized and not annoyed. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.”** (Al-Ahzab, 59). **“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms.”** (An-Nur, 31).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to Asma', daughter of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them): **“O Asma'! Once a girl reaches puberty, nothing of her body may be seen (by non-*mabrams*) except this and these, (he pointed to his face and hands while saying so).”**

However, the belief of wearing of *jilbab* is still criticized as the product of a particular culture, which should not be followed by Muslims. Nong Darol Mahmada, the activist of Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL) criticized that the meaning of veil to cover the head is only known in Indonesia. In some Islamic countries, a type of clothing veil known by several terms, such as the chador in Iran, *pardah* in India and Pakistan, *milayat* in Libya, *abaya* in Iraq, *charshaf* in Turkey, *hijab* in some Arab and African countries such as Egypt, Sudan, and Yemen. It's just a shift in the original meaning of veil as the partition, change into clothing cover the nakedness of women since the 4th century of *Hijri*. The institutionalization of women's veil and the

separation of woman and man were crystallized when the Islamic world had contacted with Hellenism and Persian civilization. In this period, the veil which was formerly used as an option outfit (occasional costume) is institutionalized as clothing compulsory for Muslim women.

The controversy about the use of *jilbab* in Indonesia begun in 1982, when rules about school uniforms were issued by the Ministry of Education Daed Joesoef 1982, has sparked banning the *jilbab* in some schools in Jakarta. For instance, on January 1983, SMAN 68 Central Jakarta prohibited their students from following the class, because they did not comply with the rules of school uniforms by wearing the veil. It was also common in SMAN 33 Jakarta and in many other places in Indonesia. However, conditions are now very different from the situation at that time, even there are many local regulations made to impose certain woman group using the *jilbab*. The number of veiling women increases in Indonesia in the last ten years. It can be felt by the large number of public figures who wear the *jilbab*, even in the entertainment and political world.<sup>2</sup>

In Indonesia, the veil has specific characteristics in accordance with the character of the user that is different from one another. For example, *kerudung*, the veil of long fabric that is covering the head and worn simply by putting it over the shoulder, this type of veil is usually used by traditional old women Muslim. Another is the traditional *hijab*. It is called by *jilbab*, a scarf covering the head, neck, and chest, fitted by young traditional Muslim women. Modern *hijab*, is a veil worn with various styles completed by accessories, as used by modern women, such as office workers, artists, politician, students, and others. Big *hijab*, a veil that covers almost the whole of female body, usually is used by the certain Muslim

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2 In this paper, it will use the word '*jilbab*' or the Indonesian refers to cloth used as a head covering and woman's chest. Because in English, headscarf or veil, which is in my opinion, those words are more generally used to form a fabric cloth covering the head without having to close the chest. The word *hijab* usually refers to the big *jilbab* that is fitted by the certain religious Muslim community



women Muslim community and many other types of veils. That type is most influenced by the development of the active Islamic *hijab* movement in educational institutions and the improving of modern *hijab* style in Indonesia.

Therefore, wearing the veil for the policewomen raises the controversy issues, especially on the usage of *jilbab* itself. The various types of veil existed in Indonesia becomes one of the reasons why wearing *jilbab* for the policewomen needs regulation. The kind of veil that is worn by some policewomen for demonstration is called *jilbab bergo*, the practical hijab that has a pet (a layer of foam on the forehead) so it is suitable for formal uniforms.

The discourse about wearing the *jilbab* began in June 2013, when Former Indonesian Police Chief General Timur Pradopo said that the case of wearing *jilbab* will evaluate the policy of prohibiting of headscarves for female police officers. Earlier, police had issued a rule that wearing *jilbab* was prohibited for policewomen. The prohibition is mentioned in *Surat Keputusan Kepala Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia No. Pol.: Skep/702/IX/2005 tanggal 30 September 2005 tentang Sebutan, Penggunaan Pakaian Dinas Seragam Polri dan PNS Polri*; (tempo.co, June 18, 2013,) and now this regulation has been renewed by *Peraturan Kepolisian Negeri Republik Indonesia Nomor 19 tahun 2015 tentang Pakaian Dinas Pegawai Negeri pada Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia*.<sup>3</sup> The new regulation is the government's response in accommodating the religious community's will that was coming from their members. Thus, this essay will show how the

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3 The explanation about the uniform with a hijab is mentioned in article no. 31 as "*Pakaian Dinas Berjilbab*" and regulated in article no. 34:

(1) PD Berjilbab sebagaimana dimaksud dalam Pasal 31 huruf c, dapat digunakan oleh Polwan dan PNS Polri wanita dalam pelaksanaan tugas. (2) PD Berjilbab digunakan pada Pakaian Dinas Umum, Pakaian Dinas Khusus, dan Pakaian Dinas Lainnya. (3) Jilbab sebagaimana dimaksud pada ayat (1) dan ayat (2) menggunakan model tunggal. (4) Gambar, bentuk, warna, kelengkapan, atribut dan penggunaan PD Berjilbab tercantum dalam lampiran "Y" yang tidak terpisahkan dari peraturan ini."

idea of identity recognition proceeds through media.

At that time, the policy of banning hijab was explained by the Police Public Relations Division Chief Brigadier General Ronny Frengky Sompie, that female officers should use the same uniform so that they cannot wear *jilbab*, except for those who served in the province of Aceh. The policewoman must have worn the same uniform while they worked. This regulation excluded those who worked as both detectives and intelligences that did not wear uniform. He also confirmed that when the woman registered to join the police institution, meaning that they should have known the provision in Corps Bhayangkara uniformed (kompas.com, June 14, 2013).

Earlier, Vice-Chairman of PPP Lukman Hakim Saifuddin asked the police to allow the Policewoman to wear *jilbab* while on duty (kompas.com, June 14, 2013). Police responded by reviewing the public's requests (kompas.com, July 9, 2013). The petition of wearing *jilbab* came also from the members of Law Commission Member House of Representatives of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Abu Bakr al- Habsy (tempo.co, September 16, 2013).

At 19 November 2013, the new Chief of Police of Indonesia stated that policewomen were allowed to wear *jilbab* (kompas.com, and tempo.co, November 19, 2013), although it was followed by the secret telegrams related to the delay of licensing decisions until the government made new regulations related to the use of the veil and the provided the state budget (kompas.com and tempo.co, November 28 2013). In fact, some districts had already allowed their police members to wear *jilbab*, in Surabaya (tempo.co, November 22, 2013), Bekasi (tempo.co, November 25, 2013), and Jombang (tempo.co, November 26, 2013). Therefore, the conflict became more pointed.

ROL proclaims that *jilbab* controversy is more intensive than the news portal. Since early June 2013, ROL had mentioned banning the veil

to get the state budget (republika.co.id, June 05, 2013). Through various sources, ROL confirmed that a ban on wearing the *jilbab* is a violation of human rights on freedom of religion. This was disclosed by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (republika.co.id, June 5, 2013), Hizbut-Tahrir Indonesia (republika.co.id, June 10, 2013), and others.

Reporting process became more intensive when Indonesian police delayed the licensing policy on veiling. Various institutions were also involved, including the movement of people who provided veils for policewomen to be worn (republika.co.id, December 05, 2013). ROL brought many comments from various institution, politic, social until religious organization, including House of Representative (December 11, 2013), Forum Ulama Umat Indonesia (December 14, 2013), Democrat Party (December 7, 2013), Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia/ICMI (December 6, 2013), Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (December 6, 2013), Woman Study Center (December 6, 2013), Partai Golkar (December 5, 2013), Nahdhatul Ulama (December 5, 2013), Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (December 11, 2013), Quran Learning Center (December 11, 2013), Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia (December 11, 2013), even there is Aliansi Pendukung Polwan Ber*jilbab* (December 8, 2013), People's Consultative Assembly (December 7, 2013), and others.

All sources very much supported the veil usage for policewomen. There was no information from any source that disapproved the policy of veil permission for policewomen. Only the police determined to delay permitting the wear of *jilbab* for reasons of funding and new regulations that will replace the previous regulations related to Police's uniform.

### **The Complex Issues of Wearing Jilbab**

The state still recognizes the fulfillment of rights even as state police officers who use certain attribute to keep religious identity in the public sphere. The policy must be coupled with the provision of "reasonable

reason, no burden, and real reason”. Some other countries also apply the same thing, such as a Canadian Muslim policewoman who remains wearing veil. There are many arguments that can be made in regard to human rights, religious obligations, recognition of diversity in the public sphere, not interfere with the performance, to support the argument of allowing veiled policewoman.

The mass media is responsible for the portrayal of information which becomes desired social change by particular interests. Within reasonable limits, ROL should proportionally provide ‘space’ for speakers in the debate and shape a healthy discourse.<sup>4</sup> ROL also informed that some of the data was the demand budgets that got full support from various parties Parliament and the Assembly, in which there were some parties declared to support the budget of veiling policewoman, i.e. Democratic Party, PKS, Golkar, and PPP, in response to the positive reaction of the public. Unfortunately, the news is only deployed to lead the readers’ sympathy and supports policy changes on the veil.

Kompas.com is quite significant in controversy purposes veiling policewoman problem, even sometimes also presents partial information by using the information that has been published previously (even by its own website). Most of the sources were from the police that wanted to confirm the protests. It was precisely in opposition to what was written by ROL which most of the sources were citizens. Thus, the construction of any discourse is the tension of government institutions in facing of society petitions.

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4 ROL use some ‘religious sense’ word for title such as ‘Perbolehkan Polwan *Berjilbab* Bakal Jadi Amal Jariah Sebelum Kapolri Pensiun’ (Juni 11, 2013), MPR: Aneh *jilbab* Dilarang Padahal Perintah Tuhan’ (December 7, 2013), ‘Polri Tunda Polwan *Berjilbab* Melukai Umat Islam’ (December 11, 2013), ‘Ustaz Bachtiar: Ridha Allah Lebih Utama daripada Imbauan Wakapolri’ (December 11, 2013), ‘Semoga Kapolri Segera Dapat Hidayah’ (December 11, 2013), Ustaz Arifin Ilham: Polri Lawan Aturan Agama Jika Larang Polwan *Berjilbab* (December 11, 2013). The dates are close each other to composing the religious statement sources.

Tempo.co provides a better illustration of presenting the news; at least it did not give partial information. Tempo not only presented information related negotiations between police and the community in evaluating certain rules but also did not confirm the support by DPR for providing a budget. Information also includes the Human Right National Commission which clarified that the police decision did not violate human rights because the police have their own rules to regulate their members. The National Commission on Human Rights considers the National Police Headquarters measures that delay the *jilbab* policy for female officers do not violate human rights, as noted on Article 73 of Law Number 39 Year 1999 on Human Rights states that rights can be regulated by law. As for the use of uniforms for its members, the police also set in the Police Act and its derivatives. Including Chief of Police regulations are being prepared as a law for the use of *jilbab* policewomen (tempo.co, December 13, 2013). The shared information from Tempo.co is limited but it is enough to cover the information that did not found in the kompas.com and ROL. However, the most importance in presenting information is preventing the overlapping of data and opinion. Therefore, the public will get a holistic view of discourse, mainly for people who have direct relation with the issues.

## Conclusion

Moral Space is built up before giving a new identity of the veil that is not only accepted as a religious obligation but also media of modernization and lifestyle transformation. In certain cases, the veil will be imposed toward becoming 'ideology' through various regulatory and governmental institutions. Therefore, the veil is perceived as goodness and person's identity. Social conditions about the veil have changed in Indonesia. It causes a natural understanding for policewomen who also wear *jilbab* as well as other Muslim women, without having to be restricted

by certain state regulations, including police regulations.

Unfortunately, the recognition process becomes increasingly complex discourse. The pressure from groups of certain religious majority against state institutions to follow their will, the use of religious terms to judge the morality of state institutions, formalizing rights into legislation that requires funds support without being accompanied by policies that make it easier for the recipient policy actors, and at worst is if it drags on, the petition would be the formal legitimacy in requiring the use of *jilbab* for women police. Thus, both the ban and the compulsory of veiling becomes a new problem, which leads to the imposition of one's identity attributes.

Media constructs the moral space that people try to negotiate on. The way the media illustrates the information by using figure comments and some social actions show the interest of media in the directing of issues. Therefore, blowing the controversial issues is very important to provoke social mobilization, including the political recognition of identity. However, the most important thing is the space where all of the members of society have the right to get state facilitation, thus that space should not enact the regulation for using or not using the identity symbol. Based on this way, the political identity by whoever party will be prevented, including by constructing mass media.

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